John Rhea ­­­8th Congress Position Paper

Character: John Rhea

Topic: 8th Congress

Delegate: Angela Vastis

As a young country, only 27 years of age, The United States of America is tackling large problems and creating bigger ideas. We are growing economically and physically every day and it greatly benefits are country. We’ve fought for our land and our people, in less than 30 years we’ve become trade partners with other countries from around the world, which is all fantastic, but now we need to take the next big step. I, John Rhea, am for the adoption of Louisiana, 828,000 square miles of land that stretched from the Mississippi River to the Rocky Mountains and from the Gulf of Mexico to Canada. If Louisiana were to be a part of the United States of America, it would enable the rapidly growing population of our country to expand westward. We would have full control of the Mississippi River and New Orleans. The river would enable faster transportation and New Orleans would provide a “strategic” location for trade between cultures and goods. The purchase for this vast stretch of land should fall around $15 million. Regarding the issue of slavery, I believe Louisiana, as other states, would be allowed to uphold the rights to slaveholding, under certain regulation. Though I see it as a great evil, agrarian work, which I value dearly, would not be as productive and beneficial without the keeping of slaves; America’s success lays in its agrarian tradition. The territory of this new purchase would not be broken up to reflect the ethnic backgrounds of the inhabitants. In fact, the removal of the native tribes should be a sound policy. Without the worry of the natives, our country would be able to expand new farmlands and increase agriculture, which would, as stated before, greatly benefit our country’s economic standings. Overall, the purchase of the Louisiana Territory would greatly benefit our country as a whole.

A second topic to discuss is the Barbary War and how it is to be dealt with. As a Democratic-Republican, I stand by Thomas Jefferson’s refusal to pay the tribute to the pirates of the Mediterranean coast of Africa. If we were to in fact pay for only a "temporary peace," a one-year guarantee, it would cost $66,000 plus a 10% commission. "Everlasting peace" would be at $160,000 plus the obligatory commission. This would only apply to Tripoli, leaving us to still have a conflict with the other Barbary States. Being diplomatic in this particular situation will only cause a continuous cycle in which we would end up paying large annual sums that could possibly be increased. Our young country cannot afford such large sums of money. In the words of Jefferson, “Why not begin a navy and decide on war? Why cannot begin in a better cause nor against a weaker foe.” Though the coast in a navy may seem expensive, it is a matter of principle that the US must not stop fighting and simply pay tribute. The United States must assert its dominance as a new but powerful nation.

The final issue I’d like to address is who should be the ultimate arbiter of the constitution. The voice of the people is the highest authority in the land and the people will make their will known through elections. The will of the people is the only legitimate foundation of any government. Otherwise, to call America a democracy is hypocritical. We must protect free expression. It is only when the government is controlled by the free people themselves do we have a democratic republic, in other words, a government of the people.

To conclude, the purchase of the territory of Louisiana should be made for the greater benefit for agrarian work and our growing population on a whole, the Barbary War should be dealt with by force to assert our young country, and the final arbiter of the constitution should be the people, to truly reflect their lives, their rights, the liberties, and aspirations.